

# **STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)**

Industry placements can be really valuable for students with special educational needs and disabilities (sometimes shortened to SEND).

## **WHAT'S THE BUSINESS CASE?**

The experience of employers who recruit people with special educational needs and disabilities shows that it makes good business sense for these reasons:

- they tap into a significant pool of talent
- performance and morale improve, as the students bring new perspectives and a breath of fresh air into the organisation
- it demonstrates a commitment to giving everyone a chance
- it raises their profile and reputation among customers and the wider community



## **WHAT SUPPORT IS THERE?**

If the student undertaking a placement with you has a special educational need and/or has a disability, their college or school will help you work out how you can best provide support.

For example, the college or school could advise on tailoring a placement role to suit the talents of a particular individual. It might mean re-thinking parts of the role, so that students can learn, develop and demonstrate the skills, knowledge and behaviours in the way that suits them best.



## HOW PROVIDERS CAN HELP

You can talk to your college or school about the help they can give you with any potential, extra support that students might need in their placement. This could include:

- travel to and from the workplace
- special equipment or adaptations such as computer apps or programmes designed to provide specific support, ensuring information is available in an accessible format
- an independent mentor
- a job coach for students with more complex needs, providing full-time supervision to help them become more confident and proficient at work
- suggesting changes to work patterns or timing
- support from the student's parents or carers

Most colleges or schools will have an industry placement coordinator who helps to arrange industry placements which fit the student and employer best. The coordinator would carry out risk assessments and health and safety checks, with the individual student's needs in mind. They can also help with the important early days of the placement, to ensure that the student settles well and that you as the employer feel supported. Help may include setting up equipment, accessibility checks of the premises, and supporting introductions to the team members.

## CASE STUDY

An employer based in the Midlands provided an industry placement for a student with learning difficulties. During the planning and set up stage of the placement, the employer and provider (together with the student and their family) discussed the placement in detail, especially the specific needs and the potential barriers to success. Together they were able to identify potential issues in advance, and mitigate these. The significant barrier was identified as being confident to attend work for the first time. Measures were put in place to support the transition to the workplace, through:

- visits to the employer prior to the placement to increase familiarity and confidence
- the student being accompanied by members of the provider team in the early stages of the placement, their presence becoming less and less over time
- the first few days being part time, slowly building up the hours
- an allocated workplace mentor to work alongside the student, especially in the early days of the placement

Within a little over a week, the student's confidence was such that they were able to attend for the full hours, knowing that they were fully supported through access to their workplace mentor when they felt that they needed support.

## MORE INFORMATION:

For detailed information about supporting people with specific special education needs or disabilities go to the [Government website](#).

# MENTAL HEALTH AND INDUSTRY PLACEMENTS

## WHY IS THIS AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION?

Society is becoming more aware of mental health generally, including at work. Common mental health conditions like anxiety and depression are the biggest reason why people are absent from work. Recent research reports that mental ill health is responsible for 72 million working days lost and costs £34.9 billion each year (Centre for Mental Health 2017). And the NHS says that mental health problems are as common among students as they are in the general population, with 17% of 17 to 19 year olds experiencing a mental disorder (Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, NHS 2017).

So, being aware of mental health and knowing how to help is good for your people and makes business sense.



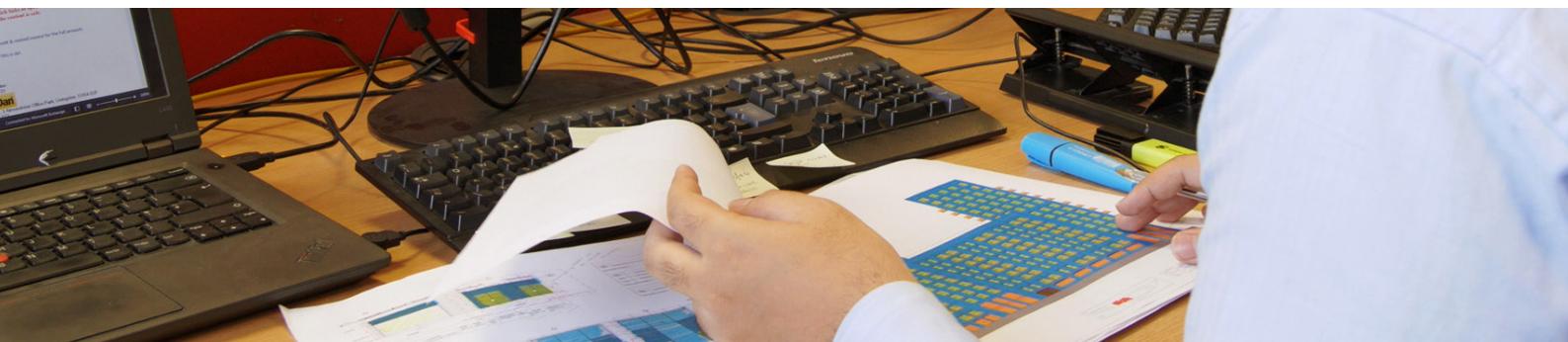
## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROMOTE POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH?

You may already have policies for mental health and ways of helping employees with mental health conditions. You might wish to sign up as a 'mindful employer' or use the resources provided by Mental Health at Work, a project run by mental health charity [Mind](#) and funded by [The Royal Foundation](#) as part of their '[Heads Together](#)' campaign.

## SUPPORT FROM THE PROVIDER

The student's college or school has the main responsibility for helping students who experience mental health conditions. Most colleges or schools have specialist student mental health services to do this.

Mental health support is part of the college and school's safeguarding duty. If a student on industry placement tells you about a mental health condition, or you see signs that give you cause for concern, contact the college or school straightaway.



## WHAT TO DO WHEN A PLACEMENT IS UNDER WAY

Coming on an industry placement could be challenging for some students. It may be their first time at work. They may be much younger than other people in the organisation. They have to balance their work with studying and other commitments such as caring responsibilities.

The most important things you can do to help are:

- give the student space and support to find their feet in the first place
- be sensitive to signs of nerves and anxiety
- do something about it straightaway - there are good many ideas about how to support young people from these organisations:
  - [Mental Health at Work](#) (resources for the 'Mindful Employer')
  - [ACAS](#) (guidance on supporting mental health in the workplace)
  - [Mind](#) (mental health information and support)

